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Meditations

On the Lord's Prayer.

BY
ARTHUR C. A. HALL, M.A.,
Mission Priest of the Society of St. John the Evangelist.

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PREFACE.

THESE addresses were originally given on the Sunday mornings during July and August, 1881, at the Church of the Advent, Boston. A request was made at the time, which has been repeated since, that they should be printed as helps to meditation.

With this view I had at first thought somewhat to change their form, but have not found the opportunity to do so, and the addresses are now written out, from notes made at the time, much as they were delivered, local and temporary references being omitted, and the hortatory form for the most part dropped.

In their present form it is thought that they may perhaps be useful for reading in Churches where Lay Readers are employed, as well as for private meditation and study.

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The Eucharistic application of several of the clauses of the Prayer (which was natural in sermons preached before the Celebration) has been retained, as showing how the different laws of Prayer find their highest realization in the celebration of those Holy Mysteries, wherein in a special sense we draw nigh to the Father in the Name of His Well-beloved Son.

A. C. A. H.

Mission House of St. John the Evangelist,
Temple Street, Boston
September, 1883.

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MEDITATION I.

"AFTER THIS MANNER PRAY YE,

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."

ST. MATTHEW, VI. 9.

"SPIRITUAL things are spiritually understood;" * and for the understanding of that spiritual prayer which our Lord Himself has taught, and with which He has bidden us approach the Father in His Name, we most certainly need the aid of the Spirit of grace and of supplication. "Lord, teach us to pray," † Thy disciples said when Thou didst give them this Divine form of prayer. This, Lord, would we say, that we may rightly understand and worthily employ this prayer, that it may be the expression of our hearts as well as the utterance of our lips. "Lord,

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. † St. Luke, xi. 1.

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teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples," they said: but not so do we ask. For that which John gave was a mere external teaching of the words of prayer, but we would be taught by Thee the spirit of prayer. Yes, pour upon us, O Lord, the Spirit of grace and of supplication,* that He may help our infirmities, who know not what to pray for, nor how to pray as we ought,† that so we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name.

Spiritual writers and theologians have spoken of the excellency of the Lord's Prayer under these heads chiefly:

1. *Its authority* and dignity by reason of Him who gave it.

2. *Its brevity*, so short a prayer that all may easily learn and be able often to repeat it.

3. *Its fulness*, in so short a compass embracing all possible needs.

4. *The perfect order* of its petitions.

All these excellences we may well consider as summed up and expressed by the familiar

* Zech. xii. 10. † Rom. viii. 26.

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title "the Lord's Prayer." It is the prayer taught to His disciples by Jesus Christ our Lord, by Him who is very God and very Man, who by the terms of His Being is the Mediator between God and man, being Himself both God and Man, and thus representing God to man and man to God.

a. Consider the prayer as given by Him who is very God, the co-essential Son of the Father. God provides the very words which He will be pleased to hear. With what confidence should we approach Him praying this prayer! When we speak to the Father in the very prayer and supplication which the Son has taught, we cannot doubt of being heard, provided, of course, that we come not only with the words, but with the dispositions of heart that they express. He regards not the appearance but the heart.*

b. Consider too that as very Man He Who prescribed the prayer knew by personal experience our needs. He knew not only what God desires to give, but He knew, and (blessed thought!) He knows—what man

* 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

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needs to ask. Whatever need we have, is here expressed; what cannot find a place in this prayer under one or other of its petitions, should not be asked. Nothing is omitted from it which ought to be contained in our prayers and aspirations to Heaven, as St. Augustine says. The words which Jesus Christ our Lord taught us should be the form of our desires. We may not ask aught beyond what is contained therein. The Lord's Prayer then, this "compendium of Heavenly teaching" as the Fathers call it, should be studied and cherished by us both—

1. As a *Formula* of prayer for constant use, and 2, as a *Pattern* on which all our prayers, public and private, should be modelled. Its characteristic features should be reproduced in all our approaches to God, the spirit of reverence and reserve, of filial trust and fraternal charity, its open-hearted confidence, and its divine order, in which temporal interests are subordinated to those which are spiritual and eternal.

I. Our Lord's command, "After this manner pray ye," rules the Church's constant

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practice. In all her offices the Church continually repeats the Lord's words.

Let us consider our own employment of the Divine Prayer. We often use it; but it is to be feared we search too seldom into the depths of its meaning. If we would accustom ourselves to meditate upon the fulness of its meaning and the vast reach of its application, we should delight in its frequent repetition. People sometimes think it a vain repetition to say it over and over again, even in different parts of the church service. Some indeed fancy that such a practice is forbidden by our Lord's warning, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions." * They forget His own example in the Garden, how He took the same few words as the utterance of His burdened heart, repeating them again and again.† Not on account of its often repetition, but because of its meaningless repetition may we come under our Lord's condemnation. If we said *this* prayer more often and devoutly, we should rather avoid the condemnation of "vain repetitions" and "idle

* St. Matt. vi. 7.

† St. Matt. xxvi. 44.

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babbling" of which mere human compositions are in danger.*

Of the Lord's Prayer Martin Luther in his mature life said in his quaint way, "to this very day I suck it as a child, and eat and drink it like an old man. The *Pater noster* is the greatest martyr upon earth; for every one tortures and ill-uses it. Few gladden and comfort it by devout and worthy use."

"Let us then," to adopt the words of St. Cyprian, "pray as God our Master taught us. It is praying like friends and familiars to offer up to God of His own, to mount unto God's hearing with the petitioning of Christ. Let the Father recognize the words of the Son when we offer up our prayer." †

II. So much for *the form* enjoined. Let us now consider *the spirit* inculcated and encouraged by the Lord's Prayer. Concerning

* *Μὴ βαττολογήσητε* signifies empty declamation, verbosity, and easy rhetoric, the use of many words with little meaning, rather than the saying again and again of simple, earnest words of prayer. —Rev. R. M. Benson, *The Divine Rule of Prayer.*

† Treatise on the Lord's Prayer, 1.

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this, we may take three leading thoughts, suggested in the address with which the Prayer commences, and see how it teaches us:

1. Toward God—a filial spirit;
2. Toward others—a loving fraternal spirit;
3. Toward ourselves—true respect for ourselves as children of a Heavenly Father.

1. We are allowed, encouraged, commanded to address the Most High as "*Our Father.*" What confidence should not this inspire! Who would have dared to use the title unless thus taught? God is spoken of in the Old Testament as the Father of His people collectively and individually, but as an address it is not found in the Old Testament. It is reserved for that closer relation into which we are admitted in the New Covenant. It belongs to us especially as Christians. The "Our Father" is the prayer of the baptized and of these alone in its full sense.

We must cultivate this *filial attitude* toward God. We may see more of the force of this title if we prefix the address to each peti-

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tion, and say "*Our Father, Hallowed be Thy Name,*" with a filial zeal for our Father's honor; "*Our Father, Thy Kingdom come,*" with an eager expectance of our Heavenly Home; "*Our Father, Thy Will be done,*" in a spirit of child-like resignation and obedient trust; "*Our Father, Give us this day our daily bread,*" in continual dependence upon Him; "*Our Father, forgive us our trespasses,*" with loving sorrow for having grieved our Heavenly Parent; "*Our Father, lead us not into temptation,*" trusting in His guidance, and relying on His wisdom; "*Our Father, deliver us from evil,*" surrendering ourselves to His safe guardianship.

Think not of God as a mighty but uninterested Being from whom blessings are to be wrung—a hard task-master exacting heavy burdens, and imposing arbitrary laws, but as a loving Father. Look up with the simplicity of a child's trustfulness to its parent. A mother's love, a father's care, are but a reflection of His love and interest. God gives us this plea by which to appeal to Him; this plea of an enduring relation which lasts on

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even in spite of the misconduct of the child, aggravating indeed the guilt of our sin, but assuring us of His readiness to receive us on our return, His yearning over us even in our disobedience. Consider the title as an appeal to God and an appeal to us.

"*Our Father.* What indulgence is it of the Lord, what exuberance of condescension and goodness toward us, to permit us when praying in God's presence, to address ourselves to God as a Father, and name ourselves sons of God, even as Christ is Son of God! A name it is which none of us would have dared to reach unto, had not He Himself allowed us thus to pray. We should, therefore, dearest brethren, recollect and feel that when we call God our Father, we ought to act like sons of God, and if we have a comfort in regarding Him as our Father, let us cause that He may be comforted in us." *

He shows Himself to us as a most loving Father, whether He console us with prosperity or try us by sorrow. Under either dispensation we must show ourselves obedient children.

* St. Cyprian, On the Lord's Prayer, 6.

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2. "*Our Father.*" We are taught by these words to pray in a *fraternal spirit* toward others, including others in our supplications. *Meum* and *tuum* are not Christian words; *Pater noster* marks the Christain spirit, a fraternal spirit banishing individual selfishness, triumphing over distinctions of social rank, differences of education, national divisions. "All equal are within the Church's gate." All are one in Christ Jesus. We are taught to pray for and with all the members of the Christian Family. This especially we are to realize in the highest act of Christian worship when we draw near to God in the Holy Eucharist, and with Angels and Archangels and all the company of Heaven we praise His Holy Name, our common Father, and feeding on the One Bread and One Body are afresh united with all the members of the mystical Body of Christ, the Blessed in Paradise and the Holy Church throughout the world.

"Above all things, the Teacher of peace and Master of unity would not have us men pray singly and severally, since when any

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prays he is not to pray for himself only. For we say not, '*My* Father,' etc., nor "Give *me*." But our prayer is general and for all; and when we pray we pray not for one person but for us all, because we all are one." *

"This expression '*Our Father*' tends to give all men a due value of their dignity as Christians, inculcates self-respect in the lowly and humility in those of high degree; for it teaches us that there is one God the Lord and Father of all, rich in pity to all who call upon Him, but no respecter of persons, and that there is one Christian nobility, since all who are born of water and the Spirit are sons of God and joint heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven." †

3. Let us not forget the lesson of *self-respect* in the highest sense which this address to God as "Our Father" teaches. It is no mere term of endearment, or figure of speech. Created in His image, we have been made His children by adoption and grace as gathered into the Body of the Incarnate Son,

* St. Cyprian, On the Lord's Prayer, 4.

† Bishop Forbes, *Commentary on the Litany*.

"made partakers of the Divine Nature,"* that we might be perfected in His likeness.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. . . Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." †

Let us endeavor then to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called;" ‡ being imitators of God as His dear children. §

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call Him Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." ‖

"Lord, teach us this and every day
To live more nearly as we pray."

* 2 St. Pet. i. 4.
† 1 St. John, iii. 1, 3.
‡ Eph. iv. 1.
§ Eph. v. 1.
‖ 1 St. Pet. i. 14–17.

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MEDITATION II.

"HALLOWED BE THY NAME."

ST. MATTHEW, VI. 9.

THESE words are at once *an act of profound adoration* and *an intense petition;* an act of adoration, in which we join in the unceasing cry of the Heavenly intelligences: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," and falling before His Throne declare Him to be "worthy to receive glory and honor and power;" * and at the same time an intense petition, praying that He before whom we fall may be everywhere and by all *counted* worthy. Thus only can we hallow God's Name, which in itself *is* holy, by declaring its holiness and praying that it may by all be acknowledged.

It will be well to remind ourselves of the

* Rev. iv. 8, 11.

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four chief elements of Prayer in which our utterance to God clothes itself.

Prayer has been defined as the lifting up of the heart to God; the lifting up of the heart, not of the voice only but of all the inner being of man. "Pour out your heart before God," says the Psalmist. We are to draw near, our Lord teaches us, by the address to "Our Father Who is in Heaven," in a spirit of filial confidence, bringing before Him all our joys and sorrows, our hopes and fears. Four subjects chiefly will determine the character and tone of our prayer.

1. The heart may be full of the thought of God's greatness, His goodness, His power and wisdom. As we listen to His word or contemplate His works in nature or in grace, admiration and love are kindled, and find expression in *Praise.*

We may take as an example of this first element of Prayer the *Gloria in Excelsis* hymn, founded on the adoration of the Angels as they wonder at the stupendous mystery of the Incarnation.*

* St. Luke, ii. 14.

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2. Or again we may be possessed with the remembrance of the many blessings vouchsafed to us; we think of God's goodness shown to us, and we lift up a heart full of gratitude, and its utterance is *Thanksgiving*. So Mary, the highly favored instrument of the Incarnation, her heart full of wonder at the great things God had done for her, bursts forth in Thanksgiving: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, for He that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is His Name.*

3. By way of contrast with the thoughts of God's goodness we are conscious, miserably conscious, of our own sins, our ingratitude to Him who has ever been so good to us, and we unburden ourselves in *Confession*.

The poor publican in the temple, his heart full of the sense of his sins and misery, bowed down before the Holy God, and smiting his breast, confessed his sin, saying "God, be merciful to me a sinner." †

4. Or apart from the moral faults that we have to acknowledge we are sensible of our needs, our weakness, the frailty of our life,

* St. Luke, 1. 46, 49. † St. Luke, xviii. 13.

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natural and spiritual, and our prayer takes the form of *Supplication.*

The robber on his cross, feeling his life to be fast ebbing out, besought Jesus, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." *

The disciples in the tempest on the sea, full of the danger which threatened them, urged in supplication, "Lord, save us; we perish." †

These four elements of prayer,—Worship, Thanksgiving, Confession and Supplication, ought all to find a place in our prayers. All are provided for in the model prayer, and that in the due and fitting order.

I. Note that in the Lord's Prayer the first place is given to simple worship without any thought of ourselves, our needs or sins. Our duty toward God, the Church Catechism teaches us, "is to worship Him, to give Him thanks, to put our whole trust in Him, to call upon Him, to honor His Holy Name and His word." This is the law of the Lord's Prayer. When first we come into His

* St. Luke, xxiii. 42. † St. Matt. viii. 25.

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Presence we are taught to bow down and salute Him with lowliest reverence.

We must approach with filial love and confidence, in the spirit of adoption as to "Our Father," in filial reverence, for He is in Heaven and we upon earth. First we say in self-forgetful worship, "Hallowed be Thy Name."

"Our words and entreaties when we pray must be under rule. They must have quietness and modesty in them. We must consider that we stand in God's Presence. The carriage of body and the measure of voice must find acceptance with the Eye Divine." *

Consider the manifold provision for *worship*, the conspicuous place it holds in the Church's service, the frequent doxologies and ascriptions, beside the more direct acts of praise. Is this element found in our prayers? Is it a prominent idea in our minds? For this we chiefly meet together. The assemblies of the faithful are in a "Place of Worship;" we speak of the "Hours of Worship." Yet how commonly is edification the chief

* St. Cyprian, On the Lord's Prayer, 2.

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object in the so-called worshipper's mind, and not the paying of homage to the Almighty, the Source and End of our being, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier!

Passing from the *worship* of God for what He is in Himself to *thanksgiving* for His goodness to us, we should learn confidence for the future or in present anxiety from the remembrance of God's loving dealing with us in the past, for which we render Him thanks.

> "So long Thy power hath led me
> Sure it still will lead me on."

If we examine St. Paul's Epistles, his letters of advice or remonstrance addressed to his spiritual children, we see that it was his almost invariable custom to begin them by an act of thanksgiving for what God had already done. From this he draws encouragement and assurance that the Lord will perfect that which He has already begun. Let us remember the duty of thanksgiving and the benefit of cherishing this element along with that of worship in our prayers.

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We owe to God the acknowledgment of His mercies. But how infrequent and how cold in comparison with the supplication that we present—in sudden danger it may be, or in sickness, or for safe conduct on a voyage —are the thanksgivings that we offer. "I will magnify Thee O God, my King: and I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever. Every day will I give thanks unto Thee: and praise Thy Name for ever and ever." *

II. We have thought of this first petition as an act of Adoration and of Thanksgiving, and have learned from its position at the head of the prayer the place which those elements should hold in our devotions. We may regard it further as an act of *Supplication*, a prayer that all may truly know and duly honor God's Holy Name, "the mention and the memory and all the monuments thereof" (as Bishop Andrewes says), all, that is, which is called by His Name, His Word and Sacraments, the Church and Ministry; and thus considering it we should note again the place which the petition occupies at the

* Ps. cxlv. 1, 2.

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beginning of the Prayer. *This* is the first petition we are taught to offer. This should therefore be our chief, our all-controlling desire. *Before* we ask aught for ourselves, even the necessaries of life (for our souls or bodies), we are to seek *His* glory and the spread of His kingdom. And *in all* our requests for ourselves this is to be the supreme consideration. As we learn the true force of the Invocation by prefixing it to each petition of the Prayer, so should this first petition dominate all that follows. As a *condition* and as a *plea* this, "Hallowed be Thy Name," runs through the whole prayer. So should we learn to pray. As a condition: Give, O Heavenly Father, or withhold this which I desire for myself and others—health, success, talent, whatever it may be—as Thou seest best, and as shall be most for Thy glory. And as a *plea*, what force it gives to our petition and what encouragement in asking: Grant me this gift, O Heavenly Father, that by it I may have fresh occasion to magnify Thy Name.* Forgive me my sins, deliver

* 2 Cor. i. 11.

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me from temptation, for the glory of Thy Name: make me a monument of Thy grace, that others, the Saints in Paradise who watch the struggle, my Angel Guardian, as well as my companions on earth, may glorify Thee in me. *

How should this plea encourage us in prayer, and check all fretting, all suggestions of God as a grudging Giver, as unwilling to grant what we so earnestly desire! O struggling and sometimes despairing soul, He desires thy salvation, thy sanctification, more than thou desirest it. O anxious mother, He yearns over the soul of that son for whom thou prayest, with a parental love of which thine is but a faint reflection. Associate thyself with Him in prayer and in holy energy, as a fellow-worker with God. Plead with Him for help, because the honor of victory shall be His, not thine, while the defeat would be a triumph of the enemy against Him and not merely against thyself. Say in the words of the Psalm, "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy Name:

* Gal. i. 24.

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O deliver us, and be merciful unto our sins for Thy Name's sake." * "O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for Thy honor, and Thy Name's sake." †

III. And then we must not forget that *the rule of prayer is ever the rule of life*, that as we pray so we must strive to live. If we are taught to approach God thus with an act of worship, "Hallowed be Thy Name," we should learn to surrender ourselves wholly and unreservedly to Him whom thus we worship. Do I say this prayer daily on my knees and then go forth to lead an aimless, selfish life? Am I seeking, in my work and life, *His* glory or my own? *Ad majorem Dei gloriam*, "to the greater glory of God," a noble motto was that which Ignatius Loyola chose for the band of servants he formed to labor and pray for the salvation of souls and the interests of Jesus. It is the rule for the life and work of us all by the first petition of the Lord's Prayer. What a condemnation does it involve of all envy, and jeal-

* Ps. lxxix. 9.

† Ps. xliv., comp. Ezek. xxxvi. 21, etc.

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ousy, and party spirit, of all the meanness and pettiness of self-seeking, which so often (alas!) mars the work that we would do for God! As we meditate on this clause we learn to pray with more significance the familiar words of the Church's collect, "that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy Holy Name."

This was the rule of Jesus' life: "I seek not Mine own glory, but His that sent Me." *

This was the sublime expectation and hope of the Apostle, that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death.†

In sickness or in health, in joy or in sorrow, by my success or in my failure, Hallowed be Thy Name, O Lord. Seek to make this your rule, your choice. How shall I act? what shall I choose, for the glory of God? Let this be the determining consideration, *Ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

What an inspiring motive does this give! how great an encouragement under temptation! how urgent an incentive to strive

* St. John, viii. 50. † Phil. i. 20.

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after holiness, that God may be glorified in us!

By our labors, by our suffering, by our example, by our prayers, by our endurance of temptation, by the grace which He bestows upon us, may His glory be advanced, His Name be hallowed.

May our light so shine before men—the reflected light that He pours upon us as we turn toward Him—that they may see our good works, and glorify (not us, but) our Father who is in Heaven.* May His Holy Name, the Name which is called upon us, never be unhallowed, or blasphemed among the unbelievers, by our bad example or inconsistency, our irreverence or levity. †

Let us see that this petition has its due place in our prayers, as an expression, 1. of *actual worship*, indicating 2. a *reverential* spirit, and 3. a *desire* and striving for God's glory.

Let us consider *the application of this petition to the Holy Eucharist*, our Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, wherein all our

* St. Matt. v. 16. † Rom. ii. 24.

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prayers find their highest realization. In the blessed Eucharist in a special manner, in the highest, do we, if we rightly join in that Heavenly Sacrifice, hallow God's Name.

For therein—

1. Before all we shew forth His goodness and love unspeakable, for which it is indeed meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should, with the host of Heaven, laud and magnify His glorious Name.

2. Therein we present to the Eternal Father His Well-beloved Son, mystically slain upon the Altar, "the Lamb as It had been slain,* with all the merits of His Passion and of His perfect obedience even unto death. This is our highest, our one worthy act of worship, this our true sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, by the offering of which God's Name should be great among the Gentiles.†

> "Behold, Lord God, the Face of Thine own Christ
> Shewn forth to Thee in Thy dread Eucharist."

3. And along with Him, the Incarnate

* Rev. v. 6. † Mal. i. 11.

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Son, "we offer and present ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice," to do and suffer all that He shall appoint, to the glory of His Name, Who is worthy to receive all glory, honor, and power: for He has created all things, and for His pleasure they are and were created.*

* Rev. iv. 11.

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MEDITATION III.

"THY KINGDOM COME."

ST. MATTHEW, IV. 10.

IT has been sometimes claimed or pretended that the Lord's Prayer is only a compilation from previously existing forms of prayer in use among the Jews or even among heathen nations. The assertion or supposition is altogether unsupported by historical testimony. But even were it true, or partially so, there would be nothing really remarkable to a thoughtful Christian in the fact. Christ our Lord, the Incarnate Son, we worship as the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* As the Word of God He speaks, and from the beginning has spoken, in the consciences of *all*, even where no further external revelation has been vouchsafed. All that is really true

* St. John, i. 9.

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and noble in individual lives or in systems of philosophy or religion is to be attributed to Him, and to be regarded not as hostile but as preparatory to His fuller revelation as He is made known to us manifest in the flesh. So that we should not have been surprised had our Lord *compiled* in part the Prayer which He taught His disciples, from prayers and aspirations with which He had previously inspired those who were, though in comparative darkness and ignorance, seeking after Him. The *order* would still be His, and the *sanction* His, and a fuller meaning too, even in the parts that were compiled rather than composed. He would have *adopted* and He would have *adapted* them. But as a matter of fact, the supposition or suggestion is destitute of anything like proof. It is only the first two petitions of the Lord's Prayer to which any parallels have been adduced from prayers which were at all probably in use at the time. "Let His great Name (referring to Jehovah) be glorified and sanctified in the world . . . May He cause His kingdom to have dominion in your life and in your

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days;" these are petitions which *may* have been in use in the Synagogue worship in the time of our Saviour's ministry. They correspond, as we see, pretty closely with the first two petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Both are suggested by many passages in the Old Testament Scriptures. The meaning of the former petition is that the Holy God may be honored as holy both with our lips and in our lives. The latter as used by the Jews was a petition for the speedy approach of the Messiah's kingdom. In the mouth of a Christian it has a two-fold application, relating in the first instance to the spread of Christ's Church on earth, but secondly and more fully to His triumphant reign hereafter. The one indeed is but the beginning of which the other is the completion.*

We are to consider this second petition in the Lord's Prayer. After this manner, or when ye pray, say "Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, *Thy kingdom come.*"

* See Mansel in the *Speaker's Commentary*, and De Wette quoted in Lange, *in loc.*

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The first idea probably which most of us had concerning this petition, when as children we began to think of the meaning of the words we were taught to say, was that it was a prayer *for the coming of our Lord in glory* to judge the world and to manifest God's perfect rule. And this is *true.* All other meanings lead up to this. We do pray in this petition for the revelation of God's kingdom, for its consummation at the end, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever in undisputed sway.*

But while all other meanings lead up to this, to say the prayer in this sense involves the saying and the desiring it in other subordinate and preparatory meanings. It is written in the Prophet Amos, † "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light . . . even very dark, and no brightness in it." Unless Christ's kingdom and reign is being continually more and

* Rev. xi. 15.

† Amos, v. 18–20, comp. 2 Thess. i. 7–10.

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more established *within* us by grace, we cannot—save as a terrible imprecation—pray for His coming in glory. This comes home to us sometimes (a clergyman must often have the experience) as we kneel by the bedside of a sick person wavering between life and death, and repeat the words the Lord has taught, the only prayer perhaps known to the sufferer. And in what sense is this petition then to be offered? Surely first of all that God's sovereignty may be acknowledged in that soul; that it may yield itself so entirely to Him, that, if it be His good pleasure to prolong life and restore health, the opportunity and space for repentance may be embraced, and all powers and faculties more truly used for His glory and in obedience to His law than in the past.

"To pray and to wish" (says St. Augustine) "that His kingdom may come is nothing else than to wish that He may make us worthy of His kingdom, lest (which God forbid) He should come, but not *for us*. He comes to those to whom He saith: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.' He doth not come to those to

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whom He saith, 'Depart, ye cursed.' When we say 'Thy kingdom come,' we mean that He may come to us."

I. We are to pray, then, first in this petition for the setting up of God's kingdom *within ourselves.*

And this is a prayer which with perfect confidence we can offer. Our prayers and endeavors for others may be thwarted; our work may fail; God's grace won for them may be rejected by their own free will. For one soul we can with absolute assurance pray, if only we really desire that for which we pray, our own. "This is the will of God, even our sanctification." * He is more ready to hear than we to ask. He is wont to give more than we desire or deserve.

a. When we say this prayer then we should bring in intention each faculty of our being before His throne, and make all do homage to Him their rightful Ruler.

Jesus, Master, master me; rule in my will by obedience, in my understanding by faith, in my affections by love, over my passions by

* 1 Thess. iv. 3.

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mortification; that renouncing the World and its maxims, the Flesh and its lusts, the Devil and his works, I may be free to act according to the true law of my being, and in complete surrender to Thy service may find perfect freedom. Take me for Thine own. I am Thine by creation, by redemption, by sanctification; I would be Thine by my own free choice.

b. This involves the renunciation of other matters.

Christ can accept no divided allegiance. He is an absolute Monarch.

Accordingly, in the significant order of the Church's Baptismal rites, the catechumen before pledging himself to Christ in faith—accepting His word and revelation, and in life—promising obedience to His holy law, is first called upon to renounce Christ's enemies, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."*

* St. Matt. vi. 24.

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To those who have been baptized into Christ the Apostle writes, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."*

c. Christ's is a beneficent rule, absolute but "for our good always." †

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself (He says); but in Me is thine help. I will be thy King." ‡ "Come unto Me," is His comfortable word of invitation, "all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." §

"O Lord, our God," we may respond, "Thou wilt ordain peace for us: other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us; but hence-

* Rom. vi. 12, 13.
† Deut. vi. 24.
‡ Hos. xiii. 9.
§ St. Matt. xi. 28–30.

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forth we will make mention of Thy Name only." *

Two things are necessary for a stable and healthy state, whether kingdom or republic: (1) a wise legislative authority, and (2) a strong executive power.

An earthly ruler, in Church or State, we cannot trust with unlimited power. It would almost certainly degenerate into a despotism; we devise therefore various checks and limitations. But God's absolute sovereignty is the absolute rule of a *Father*. "Our Father," we pray, "Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come," as within ourselves, so throughout the world. The coming of His Kingdom is like the restoration of peace and security in a city that has been long besieged and held by the enemy. Some may recall the thrilling story of the relief of Lucknow in the Indian mutiny, when the English, shut in with their women and children and besieged by a large rebel force were reduced to greatest trials, and in daily fear of massacre, or of shame that was worse

* Isa. xxvi. 12, 13.

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than death, at the hands of the rebel natives, waiting and longing for the coming of the relief expedition, with what joy they welcomed the sounds of its approach to effect their deliverance, and re-establish order and peace by the restoration of the legitimate government. Even so does the spirit that is loyal to God amid all temptations long for the subdual of the rebellious passions and despotic powers to whose tyranny it is exposed, and for the setting up of His undisputed rule.

II. We must seek *the establishment and acknowledgment of God's Kingdom around us in the world as well as within ourselves.*

A test and an important testimony of the value we set upon Christian privileges, our knowledge of the faith, our possession of the means of grace, will be our zeal to propagate and extend the same to others. As a loyal subject, living under a good government, is anxious that all may know its excellence and be induced to be partakers of its privileges and blessings, so will the child and servant of God entertain a holy zeal for the extension of the Kingdom of Grace.

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a. As in the individual happiness and peace follow on righteousness and obedience to God, so it is with society at large. Only thus can true social happiness and peace be attained.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a disgrace to any people." * Purity, justice, love, truth, unselfishness, obedience, produce peace, health and security.

What causes anxiety in the nations around, our own and others? Wretched feuds between class and class, corruption and trickery in politics and business, degradation of family life follow as the natural consequence of a disregard of the Christian Law, the Christian Faith, the Christian Church.

We look around and see oppression, violence, wrong, vice, and we pray

> "Thy Kingdom, O God,
> Thy rule, O Christ, begin;
> Break with Thine iron rod
> The tyrannies of sin."

"Let Thy way be known upon earth: Thy saving health among all nations.

* Prov. xiv. 34.

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"Let the people praise Thee, O God: yea, let all the people praise Thee.

"*Then* shall the earth bring forth her increase: and God, even our own God, shall give us His blessing." *

b. "*Thy* Kingdom Come," we pray. Mere philanthropy will not suffice. Civilization alone, though itself the outcome of Christianity, is powerless to accomplish the result. Education, industry, the material advance of which men boast, are good in their way, and blessed if rightly used; but they are hurtful if misused, for they may blind men and stifle higher, better longings. Man is made for something higher than these earthly blessings. We must not be content with any means of amelioration short of the Gospel, of the setting up of Christ's kingdom; no motive less powerful, no aid less mighty, no sanction less awful, can effect the work.

It is not merely influence derived from Thy teaching, O Christ, but submission to Thy sovereignty and rule, the acknowledgment of Thee as King of kings and Lord of

* Ps. lxvii.

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lords that can alone remedy the ills of this disordered world, groaning in bondage under the usurpation and tyranny of the Prince of Darkness.

As we say this petition, then, let us pray *for Heathen nations*, that they may be delivered from the power of darkness and be translated into the kingdom of the well-beloved Son. In the words of the great Jesuit Missionary, St. Francis Xavier, we may pray, "Remember, O Lord, the multitude of the Heathen, who though created in Thine image are perishing in their ignorance, and according to the propitiation of Thy dear Son, grant that by the prayers and labors of Thy Church they may be delivered from all superstition and unbelief, and brought to worship Thee, through Him Whom Thou hast sent to be our Salvation, the Resurrection and the Life of all who believe the same, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

And let us pray *for the extension and purification of the Christian Church*, that it may be continually increased by the gathering in of new children to God, and perfected by the

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increasing devotion of those who have been regenerated.

c. Along with such prayers there must be efforts of holy zeal. What are we doing (we should ask ourselves) in correspondence with this prayer, in the way of self-denying alms and personal labor, in the dedication of time and talents, in the use of our influence, for the work of instructing the ignorant, reclaiming the lost, consoling the afflicted ?

The piteous appeals (with their pitiable returns) of missionary boards for men and money to extend Christ's Kingdom, should fill us with shame. What more glorious vocation than to be associated with Him Who goes forth conquering and to conquer, suffering in witness to the Truth !

Are we in any way *impeding* or retarding the spread of His Kingdom, by *keeping back* others who would dedicate themselves wholly to a life of Prayer, of Penitence and Toil, chilling them by our lack of sympathy, hindering their work by illiberality, or by our inconsistency and bad example counteracting their labor ?

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III. *Thy Kingdom come.* The petition is *for the coming of the Kingdom of Glory.* We pray for the perfect consummation at the last, for the unfolding of mysteries, for the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of Almighty God—the cause of terror to the ungodly, but of joy unspeakable to the faithful and obedient.

In the midst of the tribulations of the world, the Church of Christ dwells with fond delight on the concluding promise of her Lord, His last words in Holy Scripture, "Surely I come quickly." With the beloved and loving disciple, she responds, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." *

There are those who look for a millenium on the earth. But the promises of Messiah's Kingdom can never be fully realized here. The Church will not be without spot or wrinkle, until she is seen descending from Heaven as a Bride adorned for her husband. Here there will ever be offences and divisions. The perfected reign of Christ in purity and peace is not to be revealed in this world.

* Rev. xxii. 20.

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This world must first pass away; it is to be destroyed, burned up, as penetrated with evil. We, according to His promise, look for new Heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. What manner of men ought we to be, who entertain such hopes, who offer such petitions, looking for and speeding on the coming of the day of God? *

In this petition the Church on earth still militant associates herself with the Church at rest and expectant in Paradise. With the souls under the Altar she cries, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" †

We have noticed before how we say the Lord's prayer *with all* in a spirit of fraternal charity, as well as in a spirit of filial confidence toward God. It is the prayer of the Body of Christ, the Family of God.

> "One family we dwell in Him,
> One Church above, beneath,
> Though now divided by the stream,
> The narrow stream of death."

And this petition in particular we offer

* 2 St. Pet. iii. 12, 13. † Rev. vi. 10.

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with and for the departed. They pray with and for us as our elder brethren; we too pray for them. They have not yet received their full reward; not yet have they received back the body, no longer a weight and burden, but a companion and help-meet for the soul in the service of God; not yet have they heard that most joyful word, "Come, ye blessed children of My Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

Accordingly, in our Burial Service, we beseech God shortly to accomplish the number of His elect and to hasten His Kingdom, that we, with all those who have departed in the true faith of His Holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting glory.

We may further, as in all the ancient Liturgies of the Church, and especially when at the Altar we plead the merits of Christ's Death on behalf of all His whole Church, ask for the departed mercy at the Last Great Day, and in the mean while that God would more and more lift up the light of His countenance upon them and give them peace.

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MEDITATION IV.

"THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."

ST. MATTHEW, VI. 10.

THE Lord's Prayer is *twice given* in the Holy Gospels, in the sixth chapter of St. Matthew and in the eleventh chapter of St. Luke. The prayer is given by these two Evangelists in an entirely different context. Most probably they report *distinct occasions* of its delivery by our Lord. St. Matthew tells of its being given early in His Ministry in the midst of what is called the Sermon on the Mount. St. Luke's narrative belongs to a later stage of the Ministry, apparently in an altogether different region, and there the prayer is given in answer to a request from one of the disciples (not of the Twelve), who had been gathered round our Lord more recently.

Moreover, in the prayer as reported by the

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two Evangelists there are certain *minor variations*, in a few instances, as to the exact *words* that are used, and by the omission (according to what is reckoned the highest manuscript authority) of certain *clauses* by St. Luke in his abbreviated form of the prayer.

This clause which we are now to consider, is one of those which has but a doubtful place in the prayer, according to St. Luke. In the Revised English Version this petition is omitted from St. Luke xi.* It has its place, of course, in the fuller form of the prayer given by St. Matthew.

The possible omission of this petition from one inspired version of the prayer is not without spiritual significance.

I. We are thus at once reminded that *the petition, "Thy will be done," is subordinate to, and in fact an expansion of, the preceding petition, "Thy Kingdom come."* Let us dwell on this thought first of all. How shall we hasten the coming of God's Kingdom; how

* Following high, but perhaps not altogether conclusive authority.

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shall we prepare for it, that when the King comes He may find us (as St. Augustine said) worthy of His Kingdom, that it may come to our joy, and not to our destruction and dismay? By our doing God's will. The familiar words suggest themselves in this connection as a warning, that it is not by our desires and wishes, but by our obedience that we are to prepare for God's Kingdom:

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven." *

This petition is at once an expansion of that which it follows, and an *explanation* of the sense in which we are to offer it. How can God's Kingdom (one might ask) be said to come? How can the petition for the coming of His kingdom, and indeed for the doing of His will, be reconciled with the doxology with which we often end the prayer, and in which we say, "Thine *is* the kingdom, and the power, and the glory"?

True it is that the Kingdom *is* the Lord's,

* St. Matt. vii. 21.

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that His throne is from everlasting, and naught can really withstand His will.*

"Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in Heaven, and in earth; and in the sea, and in all deep places." † No counsel or wisdom can prevail against the Lord. If any do oppose themselves to His will, they do but kick against the pricks. He shall be ruler even in the midst among His enemies. The waves may dash themselves in mad and impotent fury against the rock of His Sovereign Will, dash themselves they may in their wild rebellion, but only to their own confusion. His throne remains unshaken and immovable, as they fall back in foam and spray. "The waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly: but yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier;" ‡ "The Lord sitteth above the water flood: and the Lord remaineth a King forever;" § "Jehovah reigneth, be the people never so impatient; He sitteth between the Cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet." ‖

* Dan. iv. 34, 35. † Ps. cxxxv. 6. ‡ Ps. xciii. 5.
§ Ps. xxix. 9. ‖ Ps. xcix. 1.

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He must in the end subdue all enemies, and rule absolutely and universally, to our ruin or to our deliverance.

He *does* rule in Nature. It is only the will of His intelligent creatures, whether angels or men, whom He has gifted with the power of choice that they may freely serve Him, which resists His will. He desires to reign over hearts that freely acknowledge His lordship. In this sense, too, "His service is perfect freedom." His service is freely accepted by His servants who recognize the justice of its claims, the truth and beauty of its administration; in accepting it, and only thus, do they find themselves free to act according to the true law of their being.

We pray then that God's Kingdom may come, that His rule may be acknowledged by our doing His will. We pray not so much that God's will may (absolutely) be done, as that it may be done by us, and not merely upon us, or in spite of us; that we may do His will, that what He willeth may also be our will.

This is the meaning of the added words,

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"on earth as in Heaven," by us men, that is, on earth as by the blessed Angels His servants in Heaven. *Their* service is told, as well as His glory whom they serve, in the familiar verse of the Psalm, "O praise the Lord, ye Angels of His, ye that excel in strength, ye that fulfil His commandments, and hearken unto the voice of His words." *

Yes, "as in Heaven" may Thy will be done by us, blessed Lord; as in Heaven, corresponded with, willingly, joyously; not as in Hell, rebelled against, unwillingly submitted to with gnashing of teeth.

Herein consists the dignity of man's being, in his free will, in his capacity thus freely to do his Maker's will. This is the noblest feature of the Image of God wherein man was created, his freedom of choice enabling him to serve God, not with a mechanical obedience, however perfect and undeviating, like the Heavenly bodies, but in love, with voluntary surrender of his will to God, like the Heavenly intelligences. This is man's highest prerogative, this his awful responsibility,

* Ps. ciii. 20.

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the opportunity for his highest exaltation, for his perfect felicity, in rising up to and embracing the will of God; the occasion also and the possibility of his utter ruin, if he rebels against that perfect and ultimately irresistible will of his Creator. This is the perfect joy of Heaven, out of pure love to do God's will, in perfect friendship to co-operate with Him. This *the* misery of Hell, eternally to will that which is contrary to God's will, to be irretrievably fixed in antagonism of choice to Him.

II. How shall God's will be done by us thus voluntarily and joyously? Here again we do well to observe the place of this petition in the Lord's Prayer, for therein we find the answer to this question. Before we *pray*, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done," we are taught to prostrate ourselves in *worship* before our Heavenly Father and say, "Hallowed be Thy Name." Yes, it is by *first worshipping* God that we are to be ready to welcome and prepared to execute His will. As we contemplate and dwell upon His glory, His almighty power, His infinite wisdom,

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His absolute and perfect goodness, we come to desire that *His* rule may everywhere extend; we are ready (like trustful children or as docile pupils) to accept whatever command He may give. "Lord, I will follow *Thee*," one said, attracted by the amazing spectacle of His moral loveliness, "I will follow *Thee* whithersoever Thou goest." *

Our Father Which art in Heaven, the author and giver of all good things; Thou all-wise, all-perfect, all-loving One, our Master and our Lord, Hallowed be *Thy* Name, *Thy* Kingdom come, *Thy* will be done, we are taught to pray.

We must worship Him as the Thrice-Holy, if we are to learn to accept implicitly His will, as no mere arbitrary enactment, but the utterance of Him Whose Wisdom and Love are as boundless as His Power.

This, as it is the lesson we learn from the order of the petitions in the model Prayer, so too is it the way in which we are to imitate the Angels in their obedience, to do God's will on earth as it is done in Heaven.

* St. Luke, ix. 57.

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What are the functions of the blessed Angels? How do they perform the will of God? Their functions are summarized by St. Paul at the end of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews in a verse which in our ordinary rendering loses somewhat of its distinct meaning. "Are they not all," the Apostle says, "*worshipping* spirits" (ministering to God in holy liturgies), this first, and then "sent forth also to *active service and ministry*, on behalf of those who shall be heirs of salvation?" The verse thus translated, with the difference between the two Greek words preserved and marked, sets before us the twofold function of the blessed Angels, their *contemplative* and their *active* service. The former is the ground and foundation of the latter. From worshipping before the Throne of God, they go forth to execute His will in ruling nature, in withstanding rebel spirits, in ministering to them whom He deigns to call His children.

And thus it is that *we* are to go forth to do and bear all that He may appoint for us, in the strength derived from the contemplation of

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His Attributes and the worship of His Person. Much of the weakness of our efforts for God is to be attributed to the feebleness of this element of worship in our lives. We realize not His Majesty from Whom we go; we lose this impulse, and so we go not forth with courage like the Apostles and Prophets of old; we think not sufficiently of the perfection of His Attributes, and so we shrink from the cup which He bids us drink, from the cross which He bids us bear, from the discipline by which He would perfect us. This law of prayer and of life is beautifully illustrated for us in that great hymn of the Catholic Church, the *Te Deum*. In the earlier part of the canticle we are employed in simple worship, associating ourselves with the whole Church on Earth and in Heaven, with the several ranks of the Angels and of the Saints, and with the Holy Church throughout the world, in praise of God the Holy Trinity, made known by the Incarnate Son, praising Him for what He is and for what He has done. At the end of the Hymn, having thus lost ourselves, as it

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were, in the worship of God and the contemplation of His excellence, we break forth into prayer and plead with Him, by all that He has done, to have mercy upon us, to help us now and at the last. We learn to trust ourselves to Him, because in our worship of Him His trustworthiness has come home to us and taken possession of us.

Let us cultivate then the spirit of worship. "We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord," should lead to "O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded." "Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name," will enable us to go on and say, with heart as with lips, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

In connection with this thought we learn from this petition the true idea of Prayer. "The lifting up of the heart to God" we have seen to be its essence, and this petition reminds us, coming as it does before we ask any blessing for ourselves, that Prayer is not so much to bend God's will to ours, as to raise ours to God. It is not to snatch bene-

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fits from God that He is unwilling to bestow, or bestows but grudgingly. Rather, it is the appointed means of calling forth from Him the gifts that He longs to bestow upon us, but which He has made our prayer to be the condition or the means of our receiving to our profit. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us." * Yet "the soul willing according to the Will of God, God willeth what she willeth, and doth for her as for others what she willeth, and what but for her will, inspired and taught by Him, He had not done." †

Thus do we learn to say with good Bishop Andrewes, "Lord, Thou knowest and canst and willest what is best for my soul; I, wretched man that I am, neither know, nor can, nor (as I ought) will it. Do Thou, O Lord, of Thine unspeakable goodness so order and dispose of me as seemeth good to Thee and is best for me." ‡

III. As this petition is the governing law

* 1 St. John, v. 14. † Rev. Dr. Pusey.
‡ Bp. Andrewes' *Devotions*: "Deprecations."

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of prayer and desire, so must it be the real *rule of our life.* "Thy will be done." "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God," * this is the motto of the regenerate child of God, as of the Incarnate Son. "I came," He declared, "not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." † The essence of holiness in a created and dependent being consists in this, in conformity to the will of God. This is *the expression of the highest conceivable saintliness*, in a merely created being, as blessed Mary surrenders herself in lowly and perfect obedience, the willing instrument of God's high purposes in the Incarnation. She knows but in part the greatness of the mystery; but she foresees in part at least the sorrow and the shame in which God's choice, if accepted, must involve her. Nevertheless to the Angel's declaration she simply responds, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." ‡ This is *the mark of a truly converted heart*, as Saul yields himself to the service of the Lord of

* Ps. xl. 9, 10. † St. John, vi. 38.
‡ St. Luke, i. 38.

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whom until now he has been (in ignorance and unbelief) the persecutor, and, not without some sense at least of the great things he will be called upon to suffer for His Name's sake, in toil and pain, in the sneer of former associates, and the persecution and opposition of open and secret foes, cries in total self-abandonment, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"*

What is it, on the other hand, that mars the beauty, the harmony, the perfection of God's creation? It is *sin*. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," †—death, with all that leads to death. And what is sin? "Sin is the transgression of the law;"‡ it is the refusal of the created will to do the will of the Creator. It is the choice of some other object of desire, the going aside from obedience to Him in independence, self-seeking, self-gratification, self-exaltation. "Whoever wills what God wills not, so far dethrones God, and sets his own will to dispute the Almightiness and Wisdom of the Eternal God." §

* Acts, ix. 6.
† Rom. v. 12.
‡ 1 St. John, iii. 4.
§ Rev. Dr. Pusey.

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For ourselves, then, while we thus pray, are we striving to make God's will the rule of our life? Do we in doubtful cases of conscience, in questions as to our vocation, or as to the course of conduct we should pursue, put this before us as the decisive consideration, and ask, what is God's will in the matter? Do we *desire* to know and *seek* to learn His will? Do we pray for guidance? "Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my God. Show Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee." * Do we watch against the partiality of self-love, the rule of sense and pleasure, the dominion of pride within or the tyranny of the world without, and say, "Thy will, not mine, O Lord, be done?" "Whom have I in Heaven (to obey, to fear or love), but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison with Thee." † Not policy, but principle: not expediency or pleasure; not the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but Thine, O Lord, be done. Yes, this must be the ruling motto of the

* Ps. cxliii. 8, 10. † Ps. lxxiii. 24.

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Christian's heart, "Lo I come to do Thy will, O my Lord," my Creator, my Redeemer, my Father.

Often, indeed, this triumphant outburst of joyous praise and oblation will sink into the plaintive minor, "Not my will but Thine be done," when with difficulty and pain we resign that on which we have set our hearts. And this is not wrong. Jesus Christ our Lord, the Incarnate Son, in His agony in the Garden prayed, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me." True to that Human Nature which He had assumed, His created will shrank (rightly, necessarily) from suffering, from all that He foresaw to be coming upon Him during the hours of His Passion, the betrayal and denial, the mockery and blasphemy, the cross and death, the pain of body, and the far more bitter spiritual woe as the Father's Face for awhile was hidden from His Human Soul. But then He added, "Nevertheless, not as I will; but as Thou wilt," and for the glory of the Father and for our salvation accepted that cup of sorrow and drank it to the dregs. In like manner, as we shrink from

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some dreaded sorrow, or bereavement, or humiliation, or disappointment, may we pray, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me," if only we go on and finish the Saviour's prayer, "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." Let there be a thorough subordination of our will to God's, and it will not be counted sin that the offering cost us much.

It may be the solution of some difficulties that may arise in our minds, if we remember these rules and distinctions laid down by thoughtful and devout men.*

a. So long as God's will is not plainly made known, we may dissent from it without sin, because not knowingly and willingly. It is not against the will of God, even strongly to will, that it should be His will what yet may prove not to be His will, nor again is it against the will of God that we should be bowed down with grief at what is the will of God, if we accept it. That is, we may de-

* See Dr. Pusey's Sermon, "The Will of God the cure of Self-will" (*Parochial Sermons*, vol. i.), from which both thoughts and language are in this address freely borrowed.

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sire that which God intends not to bestow; we may shrink from that which He ordains. David, when the life of his child was still in suspense, fasted, and lay all night upon the ground, and besought the Lord, saying, Who can tell if the Lord will be gracious unto me, and hear my prayer, and spare the child? But when the child was dead, he arose and went into the House of God, and worshipped.*

b. And so *when God's will is revealed and made plain*, we must immediately bow down and accept it. Let the counsel of the Lord come to pass. We must not wrestle or struggle against it, but patiently submit our wills to His, not only when it goes along with our inclinations, but when it crosses them. Those who bewailed the departure of St. Paul, and the bonds which they knew awaited him at Jerusalem,† at his remonstrance ceased their entreaties, saying, The will of the Lord be done. In such trials let us endeavor with holy Eli, when the doom upon his sons and upon Israel was announced, to respond, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good."‡

* 1 Sam. xii. † Acts, xxi. 14. ‡ 1 Sam. iii. 18.

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Or with patient Job, overwhelmed with distress in mind, body, and estate, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord."*

c. Always let us remember that *nothing happens without God's will*, either ordering or permitting it. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge.† It is *His* ordering we are to obey, *His* permission in which we acquiesce. That from which we shrink may be the result of others' wrong-doing. But we may accept the cup which is handed to us by evil men as the cup which the Father gives. ‡

Entire submission to the Will of God requireth absolutely two things: 1. Wholly to will whatsoever we know to be God's will; 2. Wholly to reject whatsoever we know to be contrary to His will.

And this submission or acquiescence we shall be enabled to offer by cultivating a worshipful remembrance of God's overruling

* Job, i. 21. † St. Matt. x. 29.

‡ Compare St. Luke, xxii. 53, and St. John, xviii. 11.

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Providence, reaching from one end to another, and mightily and sweetly ordering all things,* and making all to work together for good to them that love Him.† Contemplating His Almighty Power, His Infinite Wisdom, and His Perfect Goodness, we shall gain the spirit of that holy woman, St. Jeanne Françoise de Chantal, the friend of St. Francis de Sales, who prayed, "Thy will be done, O Lord, yes, without *limit*, without *if*, without *but*, without *exception*, Thy will be done."

Let us then take this petition and say it as an *Act of Worship*, of *Oblation*, and of *Resignation;* as a *Prayer for Enabling Grace*, for ourselves and others, that we may perceive and know and also may have strength faithfully to fulfil His will; and as *an earnest desire* for the perfect manifestation of God's Kingdom, wherein "His servants shall serve Him" ‡ (it is almost the crowning promise of the Apocalypse), without let or hindrance, without reluctance or infirmity, in perfect love and peace.

* Wisdom, viii. 1. † Rom. viii. 28.

‡ Rev. xxii. 3.

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MEDITATION V.

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."

ST. MATTHEW, VI. 11.

WITH the fourth petition we enter upon the second main division of the Lord's Prayer. This we may call the more *human* portion of the prayer, as referring more immediately to ourselves. Hitherto the supplications have had a primary reference to God, His glory and honor,

1. Hallowed be *Thy* Name,
2. *Thy* kingdom come,
3. *Thy* will be done.

We have exercised in these three opening petitions the three great theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity:

1. *Faith*, as we believe in and worship God as He has revealed Himself to us;

2. *Hope*, as we look for the coming of His kingdom;

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3. *Charity*, as we embrace His will.

Nor is it fanciful for an instructed Christian to see in these three petitions, as well as an example of the three great theological virtues, a reference, also, to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity:

1. We hallow the Name of the *Father*, the representative and source of Godhead;

2. We pray for the coming of the kingdom of the Incarnate *Son*, our Redeemer;

3. By the power of the *Holy Ghost* we seek to do His will.

And now the four petitions which form the second part of the Prayer have reference to *man*, his misery and need, and we pray

4. Give *us* our daily bread;

5. Forgive *us* our trespasses;

6. Lead *us* not into temptation;

7. But deliver *us* from evil.

The order of the prayer corresponds with the exhortation of our Lord, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all other things shall be added unto you." *

* St. Matt. vi. 33.

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The position of this petition for the supply of our daily needs, following immediately upon the desire that God's will may be done by us on earth as by His angels in Heaven, reminds us of the promise of the Psalm, "The Lord will give grace and worship, and no good thing shall He withhold from them that live a godly life."† Let us endeavor really to lay to heart this lesson of subordinating temporal concerns to those which are eternal, earthly desires to spiritual, personal and selfish to wider interests.

In this fourth petition we encounter not the only exegetical question, but the first and only difficulty of translation in the Prayer. There has been considerable dispute as to the exact and literal meaning of the Greek word (itself probably a translation from the Syriac, in which our Lord spoke) which we translate *daily*—"our daily bread."

(1.) Some would translate the word ἐπιούσιον, *sufficient*, as opposed to what is superfluous;

(2.) Or that which is *fitted* for our subsist-

† Ps. lxxxiv. 12.

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ence—in effect, Solomon's "food convenient for me." *

(3.) Others, again, would render it "for the coming day;"

(4.) While a fourth translation would be, practically, "supernatural," as in St. Jerome's Latin version—"panem *supersubstantialem.*"

From these four slightly varying renderings it will be seen that our "daily," though not an exact translation, yet expresses, as nearly as any single word can, the *sense* of the disputed Greek word, if only we remember that the daily provision for which we ask is not to be limited to the supply of material necessities, but is intended to include (as the Church Catechism teaches us) "all things needful for our souls and bodies."

"Bread," as commonly both in sacred and in common language, is taken as a sample and illustration of the most necessary things. It stands for the requirements of daily life. It is not to be limited to its literal significance, although the literal significance is by no

* Prov. xxx. 8.

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means to be denied. For we have in this petition, taught by our Lord, a refutation of that false spiritualism which would exclude all earthly and temporal concerns from the sphere of religion—which would forbid such being made the subjects of prayer by a Christian man. The tendency of such a theory is to banish the sanctions and the laws of religion from the senate-house or the market, in a spirit of practical atheism relegating Almighty God (whom we ought to worship as the Creator and Governor of the Universe) to a distant throne of inaction and indifference to the affairs of this lower world, or to an inability to interfere with them. Not thus are we instructed by the Christian Church or by God's Word. Rather we are bidden "in *all* our ways acknowledge Him," and look for His blessing on all our undertakings, looking to Him as by His merciful providence ordering all things both in heaven and earth. Christ our Lord teaches us in this prayer to bring all our wants before God, and, as trustful children to a loving Father, to pour out our hearts before Him. He designed and

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framed His model prayer not for angels—pure spiritual intelligences—but for men with a composite nature, both spiritual and material.

We are, then, to regard this petition as a request for the supply of *bodily* needs; but we are not to stop there. Our "daily bread" is to include not only "food and raiment" and all material care, but mental nourishment also; instruction and education, and that social security and well-being without which the mere animal life would be no great blessing to a rational being; and, more than this, we ask for the support of our spiritual being.

"The prayer of Christian men must differ from the lion's roaring and the raven's crying. The end of their praying is that their bellies may be filled, but we must have as great a care for the food of our *souls*, wherefore we call it '*panem nostrum*,' '*our* bread.' We do not call it *panem communem*, such bread as is common to us with other creatures, but that special bread which is proper to man, who consists not only of body, but of soul and body, which must be both fed." *

* Bp. Andrewes.

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Some there are we know, as was the case with Israel of old, to whom God gives their desire, fills the belly with bread, but "sends leanness withal into their soul." *

The petition, then, includes a prayer for *the instruction of God's Word*, which is often compared to food ; † and for *the assistance and support of His Grace*, for strength to do His will, for that Bread which endureth unto everlasting life, which is contrasted by our Lord with the perishing support of the perishing life of earth ; the Bread which the Father gives from Heaven, even the Incarnate Son, who says of Himself, "I am the Bread of Life," and who, that we may have life in Him, bids us feed upon Himself in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, that Flesh which is meat indeed and that Blood which is drink indeed.‡

We shall perhaps most readily learn the lessons of this petition, if we consider under a few points the spirit of prayer, the attitude

* Ps. cvi. 15.

† See Job, xxiii. 12 ; Amos, viii. 11 ; 1 Tim. iv. 6.

‡ St. John, vi. 27, 35, 51, 55.

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toward God, which it is intended to form within us and to express.

I. It is *a prayer of Faith.* It teaches us to look to God as the Author and Giver of all good things. It is "a cry of nature"; The lions roaring after their prey do seek their meat from God." *

But man has this high privilege that he is able to acknowledge his Benefactor. "If we had our daily bread of ourselves, we would not have it of God. This confession of our want and indigence is a great glory to God." † It is an acknowledgment of our entire dependence upon Him, a fundamental truth indeed of our religion, but one which we are all, alas, sadly apt to forget, fancying ourselves, or acting as if we were, independent and sufficient of and to ourselves, boasting ourselves of our abundance, forgetful Who gives the wine and flax and oil.‡ "I am poor and needy: but the Lord careth for me," § is at once the confession of man's need and of God's bounty, which the Christian desires to have graven

* Ps. civ. 21, 28. † Bp. Andrewes.
‡ Hos. ii. 8. § Ps. xl. 20; comp. Ps. cxxii. 2.

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upon his heart. The pious custom of asking a blessing before, and of saying grace, returning thanks, that is, after meals, is of value as witnessing to this truth. It is also an imitation of our Lord's example, who looked up to Heaven and "blessed before He brake the bread," * and an application of the Apostle's word, "Every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." †

Two minor considerations belong to this view of the prayer.

a. While we recognize God as the Giver of all good things, and seek to Him for their supply, we must not ignore *the means and channels* which He has appointed for their conveyance to us. The child who is taught daily to say this prayer is not taught to expect a miraculous interposition of Almighty God to provide what we need in spite of our negligence and apart from our labor, but rather to look to God to bless our honest endeavors.‡ So with regard to spiritual

* St. Mark, vi. 41. † 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.
‡ 2 Thess. iii. 10; Ps. cxxviii. 2.

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blessings, we must not put beyond our reach, or in pride neglect, the ministrations of grace, His Word and Sacraments, which God in His love and wisdom has instituted in His Church for our enlightenment, cleansing, and refreshment.

b. Nor, again, while we ask God, our Heavenly Father, to give us those things that He sees to be needful for us, must we dare to *snatch in unlawful or forbidden ways* what He does not offer, however imperious may seem to us the need. "Man doth not live by bread alone: but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live," is the declaration of Moses to Israel concerning God's test of their allegiance,* quoted and used by the Incarnate Son, when tempted by the Evil One to swerve aside from exact obedience to the Father's will, and from trust in His care and support, by anticipating the close of that fast which He had appointed. †

Better far to starve mentally, socially, actually in bodily hunger (if it be so), while

* Deut. viii. 3. † St. Matt. iv. 4.

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maintaining our integrity, than for a mess of pottage to sell our birthright* by dishonorable conduct, or any tampering with our conscience, and the sacrifice of higher interests of purity, truth, loyalty, to secure some lower advantage.

Let us beg for grace in any such alternative to lay down our life in obedience to God's will, to be willing to lose the lower life for His sake; thus shall we surely find our true life.† To act otherwise would be to "throw one's self away"; as the Latin poet puts it, *proper vitam vivendi perdere causas*, for the sake of life to sacrifice the object of life, and that in which its worth consists.

II. The lesson of *Trust and Resignation* follows naturally in thought from the spirit of Faith which this prayer inculcates. This we have already noticed in considering the order of the supplications. In subordination to God's will we are to make request even for what seem to us the most necessary things.

* Heb. xii. 6; Gen. xxv. 32.

† St. Matt. x. 39.

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First, "*Thy will,*"—all wise, all good,—"*be done;*" then, if it be in accordance with Thy will, *give us* what to us seems needful. This is the meaning of the Collect in our Prayer Book,* in which we ask of God to "put away from us all hurtful things"; all, that is, that He sees to be injurious or dangerous (how often they are just those things which we in our ignorance and blindness most keenly desire), and to "give us those things which" He sees to "be profitable for us."

III. *Contentment* with our lot will naturally flow from this believing regard of God as the Giver of all good, and from resignation to His wise and loving will. How simply is this virtue inculcated in the prayer, wherein we are bidden ask for "daily bread," not for luxuries, but for necessaries. We ask not that our storehouses may be replenished and goods laid up for many years, but for the supply of the need of the coming day.

"Give me neither poverty nor riches," prayed the Wise Man, "but feed me with

* For eighth Sunday after Trinity.

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food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny Thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain." *

"Having food and raiment," says the Apostle, warning against covetousness, "let us be therewith content." †

"Take no thought" (be not careful or over-anxious) "for the morrow," said Jesus, "for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." ‡

IV. Another lesson there is, common to the whole Prayer, but having a special application to this petition, "Give *us*," we pray, "*our* daily bread." It is the lesson of *our mutual dependence* one upon another, as of our common dependence upon God. *Meum* and *tuum* do not belong to the Christian vocabulary: *Paternoster* is the Christian prayer and rule. We are to remember concerning any gifts which the great Father of all has bestowed upon us that we are entrusted with them as the stewards of His bounty, and that

* Prov. xxx. 8, 9. † 1 Tim. vi. 8.
‡ St. Matt. vi. 34.

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we are to use them "*for the common good.*" * "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." †

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate." ‡

This rule applies not only to gifts of money, but also to the expenditure of time, of ability and talent of any kind. Our hearts are touched full often with tales of woe, the mind sickens at the spectacle of ruin and want. To offer this prayer, on behalf of others as well as for ourselves, and then not to bestir ourselves for their relief and aid, is a mockery of God. It is to ignore His ordinary rule to work through means and instruments; it is a practical denial of His sovereignty as the Author and Source of all good things, and of our responsibility to Him for the use of those gifts which He has entrusted to our stewardship.

We have seen the bearing which the preceding petitions of the Prayer have on that

* 1 Cor. xii. 7. † Gal. vi. 2.

‡ 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18; 1 St. Pet. iv. 10.

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Holy Sacrament in which we have our most intimate approach to God. The petitions we have already considered belong to the Eucharist more particularly as the great Christian *Sacrifice*, whereby God's Name is glorified among the Gentiles,* in which we shew forth the Lord's Death till He come,† and offer ourselves to do His will.

In this petition the thought of *Communion* is more prominent. "Lord, evermore give us this bread,"‡ exclaimed the Jews, when Jesus spoke of the bread from Heaven, which should give life unto the world.

Our Lord referred indeed to "daily bread," but not to such mere material nourishment as they imagined and desired. The Bread that He promised is that which shall preserve soul and body unto everlasting life, His own glorified Humanity given to be a principle of sanctification and indwelling might to us, that our sinful bodies may be more and more cleansed by His all holy Body, and our sin-stained souls washed in His most precious Blood, that we may evermore dwell in Him

* Mal. i. 2. † 1 Cor. x. 26. ‡ St. John, vi. 34.

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and He in us. "Lord, evermore give us *this* bread," we indeed would pray. Grant us continually to seek, and with devout affection to feed upon this living and life-giving Bread which Thou daily offerest for the supply of our daily needs.

O Saving Victim, opening wide
The gate of Heaven to man below,
Our foes press in on every side,
Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.

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MEDITATION VI.

"AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS."

ST. MATTHEW, VI. 12.

I. THE place of this petition in the Lord's Prayer is not without deep significance, and may first claim our consideration; first of all, that it finds a place therein at all, and then the exact position which it holds.

The Lord's Prayer, we have several times called to mind, is the Prayer given by Jesus Christ our Lord to *His disciples*. It is the prayer of His own people, of the Regenerate, of those who in Him are accepted of the Father. It is first uttered by us or for us in its full sense immediately after the act of Baptism at the Font, when we have been born again of water and the Holy Ghost, and made members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. Not till then can we truly call upon God

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as "Our Father who art in Heaven." Had the Prayer been intended for the use of those without the covenant of Grace, the unconverted or unreconciled, its character must have been different. Such could not truly call upon the Most High as their Heavenly Father. And in that case this petition must have held the foremost place. Forgiveness and reconciliation were then the first great need of man; the barrier between himself and God must be broken down before he could approach with the full assurance of faith,* before he could ask aught of blessing from God, or pray "Thy Kingdom come."

The position of this petition then (holding a place, but a subordinate place, in the Christian's Prayer) marks the relation of sin to the Christian. Sin is not to "reign" in him, as St. Paul says,† not to be the dominant principle of his life. The Christian's will is given to God, his desire is for the setting up, the spread of God's Kingdom within himself and in all around, his longing that God's Name may be hallowed in him and by him; he

* Heb. x. 22. † Rom. vi. 12.

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even ventures to ask for the support of his redeemed life—both in body and soul—before he asks for forgiveness. But this he must ask. He cannot rise from his knees without this acknowledgment of the continual need of mercy and cleansing. True it is that "whosoever abideth in Christ sinneth not" (does not give himself to sin), that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," * so far, that is, as he is born of God; for when we sin we are not only untrue to our covenant and promise, but we fall also from our regenerate condition and state.

But true it also is that practically "in many things we offend all," † that "if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves," ‡ that "the just man falleth seven times and riseth again." §

Prayer we have seen to be "the lifting up of the heart to God." Four chief subjects may be in the heart which will determine the four different kinds or forms of Prayer:

* 1 St. John, iii. 6, 9.
† St. James, iii. 2.
‡ 1 St. John, i. 8.
§ Proverbs, xxiv 16.

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(1) It may be the thought of God's glory, His wisdom, power, love, as evidenced by His work in Nature, in Providence, or in Grace. Prayer then becomes *Worship.*

(2) Or the remembrance of God's goodness to ourselves and others, the creatures of His hands, His favored children, the benefits, spiritual and temporal, that He has heaped upon us. Thus, as expressed again in the first petition, "Hallowed be Thy Name," we lift up our hearts in *Praise and Thanksgiving.*

(3) When with the thought of our needs we bring before our Heavenly Father our hopes, desires, fears, the heart is lifted up to God in *Prayer of Supplication.* We say "*Give us* our daily bread," all things needful for our souls and bodies.

(4) Or with the heart full (is it not often full to overflowing?) of the thought of sin—"my sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up," *—we pour out our hearts in *Confession*, and cry "Forgive us our trespasses."

* Ps. xl. 15.

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Yes, "None, O Lord, have perfect rest,
For none are wholly free from sin;
And they who fain would serve Thee best
Are conscious most of sin within."

Though the will is set on doing God's will, yet we are conscious of infirmity; while we ask (in the petition for our daily bread) for strength to do God's will, we ask also for pardon for our shortcomings. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," * and not weak only, but rebellious. We find another law in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin. † "The infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerate, whereby the lust of the flesh is not subject to the law of God." ‡

We must say this prayer, therefore, until the day of perfected regeneration, until the times of the restitution of all things, § when "His servants shall serve Him" perfectly. ‖ "Wash me more and more," *amplius me lava*, ¶ will be the continual cry of the re-

* St. Mark, xiv. 38.
† Rom. vii. 23.
‡ Articles of Religion, ix.
§ Acts, iii. 21.
‖ Rev. xxii. 3.
¶ Ps. li. 2.

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deemed soul until penitence be perfected, and in that perfected penitence we find perfected cleansing.

The provision of this petition in the Lord's Prayer is a pledge to us of forgiveness. God will surely grant that for which He bids us ask. What a consolation is the assurance that He anticipates our need. At the same time by not placing this petition first Christ has taught us that this ought not to be the chief need of the Christian.

II. There is a noticeable difference in the word which is used for the faults for which we seek forgiveness in the varying translations of the Lord's Prayer in our Bible and Prayer Book. In St. Matthew we read, "Forgive us our *debts*;" in St. Luke, "Forgive us our *sins*;" in our ordinary use, following the Prayer Book version, we are accustomed to say, "Forgive us our *trespasses*."

Now these three words really correspond with three distinct Greek words used in the New Testament for sin. It is helpful to consider these as setting forth different aspects of moral evil.

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First of all to take the varying translations used in our Bible version of St. Matthew, and in our Prayer Book, "debts" and "trespasses." The word *trespass*, with the corresponding Greek παράβασις, speaks of sin on its positive side, as a *commission*. It represents sin as a violation of God's holy law, a transgression, a trespass overstepping the boundary which He has fixed, and fixed, let us remember, by no arbitrary decision. His is the law of infinite Wisdom and of perfect Love as well as of resistless Power. We sin by *commission*, we commit a trespass against God, when we do or say or think that which ought not to be thought or said or done.

We sin by *omission* when we leave undone, unsaid, unthought, those things which should have occupied our mind, our tongue, or hand. Against God the omission may be by the neglect of duties which He requires, our prayers, our worship, our study of His Word; against our neighbor, by failure to perform those works of justice or of charity which he has a right to look for from us; against ourselves, by leaving uncultivated or undeveloped faculties

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and powers of body, soul, and spirit. This is a second representation of sin, on the side of *omission*. Thus it may well be considered a "debt," as in St. Matthew's report of the Lord's Prayer, ὀφείλημα. "Forgive us our debts," we are taught to pray, the non-fulfilment of the duties Thou dost require, the withholding that which is Thy due, that which by every claim Thou hast the right to demand.

Every sin is indeed in one sense a sin of omission, a *debt*, a failure to come up to our duty, to fulfil God's Will, and correspond with His design for us; some sins are more especially sins of omission. Every sin is a *trespass*, a violation of God's holy law written in His Word, implanted in our conscience, conveyed to us by the tokens of His Providence, or through His representatives whom He places in authority over us. There is another deeper, more philosophical aspect of sin common to both these views, the trespass and the debt, and more fundamental than either of them. This is represented by the Greek word that is translated "*sin*," ἁμαρτία.

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What is sin in its essence? It is an act of the will, the will of the creature at variance with the will of God, the Creator. The will chooses, and chooses amiss. Sin is the choice of something less than the true object of desire, the choice of something other than the real end of life. It is a swerving aside from the mark, which involves loss, a taking up with something else, being led aside, it may be, by the Lust of the Flesh, sensuality and love of pleasure in some of its forms, or by the Lust of the Eye, covetousness, and worldliness, or by the Pride of Life, independence, and self-willed rejection of God's commands. This regard of sin as a vast mistake it is which underlies the frequent use in the Psalms and Proverbs of the term "folly," to express moral wrong.

III. Having considered something of the nature of sin as represented to us by the words employed in Holy Scripture to denote it, we may naturally go on to inquire somewhat of the *character of the forgiveness* of sins for which we ask.

And here again we may learn a most im-

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portant lesson from the Greek word of which our "forgive" is a rather poor and inadequate translation. Forgiveness with us is generally limited to the acquittal of the accused or guilty party, and his restoration to favor by an act of mercy. But God's forgiveness is something far greater and grander than this, more worthy of Himself. And more than this is expressed by the Greek word ἄφεσις, and by the corresponding words based upon the Latin, "absolution" and "remission." Ἄφεσις is a releasing, as Absolution is a loosing. To forgive in this sense is to set free, not merely from the penalty due to sin, but from the guilt incurred, from the bondage of sin. God wills not to surround Himself with a crowd of forgiven criminals, but with a family of regenerate children. This is the promise contained in the Sacred Name, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people *from their sins*," not merely from their penalty. * This is the glad theme of our morning Canticle, the *Benedictus*, "He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath

* St. Matt. i. 21.

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raised up a mighty salvation for us, that we should be saved from our enemies, and serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life." * This is the lesson of the Beloved Disciple, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." †

This is indeed the "double cure" which fallen man needs as he groans beneath sin's *guilt* and *bondage:*

> "Be of sin the double cure,
> Save from wrath and make me pure."

This is the twofold work of grace—to cleanse and to restore. "Make me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me." ‡ "A clean heart," we ask, purified from evil, its stain and guilt; "a right spirit," choosing the right, and adhering steadfastly to its choice. This is what we look for, the renewal of our nature, originally created in God's image, according to His likeness—the intellect enlightened by truth; the body re-

* St. Luke, i. 68 sq. † 1 St. John, i. 9.
‡ Ps. li. 10.

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strained in purity; the heart enkindled by true love; the will at once strengthened and controlled, as, being itself subject to the will of God, it exercises its proper sovereignty over the lower elements of our nature.

This is indeed so great a work, so marvellous and beyond our expectation, that it is made an article of our faith. "I believe in the forgiveness of sins;" that God can restore our nature, so far gone from original righteousness; that He can change our pride into humility, our quickness into meekness, our worldliness into heavenly wisdom.

This, O Lord, we beg of Thee: not merely to remit the penalty, but also to forgive the guilt, to blot out the stain, to heal the wound, to prevent the mischief, to loose the chain of our sins." *

IV. Such being the nature and the fulness of the forgiveness which we seek of God for our sins, we see something of the nature of that forgiveness which we are in turn to extend to others, our fellow creatures and fellow sinners, as the condition on which we ask

* Bishop Andrewes's *Devotions.*

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forgiveness for ourselves. "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors."

God promises forgiveness on certain conditions, on the condition chiefly of our repentance. "If we confess He is faithful and just to forgive." Our confession must be with (1) real sorrow for the sin we acknowledge; with (2) a full purpose of amendment; (3) with readiness to bear any punishment He may inflict, if only we may be restored to His favor. Confession to God, or before a priest, without these other elements of repentance, is worthless; it may be even worse, as deluding and ensnaring the conscience. Our forgiveness of others is one great token and sign of such repentance. Certainly without this our repentance is of little value. What can be our sense of indebtedness if, asking for the remission of the hopeless account of our ten thousand talents, we refuse to release one who owes us the petty debt of a hundred pence?" *

"Forgive thy neighbor the hurt that he hath done unto thee; so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest.

* St. Matt. xviii. 21 sq.

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"One man beareth hatred against another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord?

"He sheweth no mercy to man who is like himself, and doth he ask forgiveness of his own sins?"*

This, we may observe, is the one petition in the Prayer of the Divine Master on which He paused to comment and insist. Not, surely, because it is the most difficult to understand. We might rather in that light have looked for an explanation of the first petition, "Hallowed be Thy Name"—how could the Name of God Most High, essentially great and holy, be hallowed or unhallowed by us children of earth? Or of that which we have yet to consider, the petition which follows next—how God could be said to Lead us, or to Lead us not, into temptation. No, not because this clause is difficult to understand, but because the precept or condition annexed is hard to fulfil, therefore the Master added, "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."† Forgive too we must "from our

* Ecclus. xxviii. 2-4. † St. Matt. vi. 15.

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hearts" *—so far as in us lies after the pattern of that forgiveness which we seek from God.

Suppose some real and serious injury, not a mere slight or annoyance, an injury to our property, or our name, or to our highest interests by example or neglect; well, let us associate ourselves with the wrong-doer and him with ourselves, and together pray, "Forgive *us our* trespasses."

"What good will thy neighbor's evil do thee? If he had no evil, he would not be thy enemy. Wish good for him and he may become thy friend. It is not the nature of the man, but his fault which injures thee. Pray then against the malice of thy enemy that it may die, but that he may live. If thine enemy die, thou hast lost an enemy but not gained a friend; but if his malice die, then thou hast lost an enemy, and hast gained a friend." †

God does not indeed oblige us to forgive without those conditions of repentance on the part of those who have injured us that He

* St. Matt. xviii. 35. † St. Augustine.

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requires from those who seek His forgiveness. "If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in the day, and seven times in the day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him," is the rule laid down by Christ our Lord. * But while our brother must repent, we are to seek to win him to love, to be in a readiness to forgive and to show ourselves so disposed, even as the repentance which God accepts is itself the result of His preventing grace.

We have thought of our penitence being deepened and (God grant it) perfected hereafter. Deepened surely it will be in the hour of death, when the scales fall from our eyes, and we see ourselves and others in the light of God. Deepened without a doubt in the calm retreat of the intermediate state. Perfected, we trust, in the day of judgment and of final account. We look for this deepened and perfected penitence and contrition to lead on to our more entire cleansing and restoration. When we wholly turn to God, He will wholly turn to us. When we

* St. Luke, xvii. 4.

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wholly turn from sin and abhor it, He will wholly and entirely put it away from us. We would have our penitence now as far as possible an anticipation of that contrition which shall fill our whole being then, as we trust our absolutions now are an earnest of that final absolution, which shall indeed bid us "Go and sin no more." Our forgiveness of others must likewise be a foretaste of the forgiveness which we shall then extend. - What will remain then, in the hour of death and in the day of judgment, of the sense of petty injuries (petty at least they will then appear) which now so often disturb our charity? Will there then be room for such remembrances? Surely the heart will be too full to cherish such thoughts.

Let us remember always that "a forgiving spirit is absolutely necessary as ever we hope for pardon of our own sins, for peace in our dying moments, or for the Divine Mercy in that day when we shall most stand in need of it.

"Teach me, then, O Lord, to forget fleeting and momentary injuries, in order that

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Thou mayest forget the crimes of my whole life. Thy glory is in pardoning the sinner; and mine shall be in forgiving my brother." *

A special Eucharistic application we have noticed of each petition. It is easy to see the application of this petition to the holy mysteries of the Altar. The invitation to draw near to this Heavenly Feast is, we know, to those who do truly and earnestly repent them of their sins, and are in love and charity with their neighbors.

Together we show forth the Lord's Death; we present as fellow-sinners, as fellow-penitents, that Sacrifice once offered and continually pleaded for the sins of the whole world, the Body broken, the Blood shed for us and for many for the remission of sins. Together, as children of a common Father, we feast at His Board on Heavenly Dainties. There must be, then, the putting away of all thoughts of resentment or revenge, of all unkindly remembrance of wrongs done to us. We must

* Massillon, Sermon on The Forgiveness of Injuries.

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forgive as we hope to be forgiven, "For we being many are One Bread, and One Body: for we are all partakers of that One Bread." *

* 1 Cor. x. 17.

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MEDITATION VII.

"AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

ST. MATTHEW, VI. 13.

I. WE feel at once that there is a difficulty in this clause. The prayer seems at first sight to refer moral evil to God as its source or cause. How can God, we naturally question, be thought of as leading any into temptation to evil? The idea is against our natural instinctive belief concerning His character. It is contradicted, moreover, by the assurances of Revelation. "God cannot be tempted of evil," says St. James, "neither tempteth He any." * More than that, St. Paul assures us that, "God is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with every temptation make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." †

* St. James, i. 13. † 1 Cor. x. 13.

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And yet we are very apt wrongly to refer temptation to God in an indirect way, and to lay the blame, as it were, of our falls upon Him. Is it not to accuse Him when, seeking to excuse ourselves, we say or think that our falling into sin is owing to such and such circumstances in which God has placed us; or to our natural passions, which, as we say we cannot control? To such thoughts St. James' words apply, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." * "Say not thou, it is through the Lord that I fell away: for thou oughtest not to do the things which he hateth." †

II. True it is that God *permits* us to be tempted. And this very permission is a cause of perplexity to many earnest souls, as well as a ground of cavil to unbelievers. The existence of temptation is a stumbling-block in theory to Christian faith, as its power is a

* St. James, i. 13. † Ecclus. xv. 11.

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stumbling-block in practice to Christian living.

Why, the soul under the pressure of temptation asks, if God willed me to be holy, if He intends to bring me to happiness here and hereafter, and my happiness is dependent upon my goodness, why, oh why does He let the path of goodness be so difficult, why does He make it possible for me to fall? The answer is really most simple. Because we could not be really holy, unless there were the possibility of unholiness. Because choice is necessary for all moral goodness. We must pass through temptation to become established in grace; created in the image of God, with the marvellous power of free-will we must choose the right, and by choosing be ourselves identified with that which we choose. Temptation is therefore permitted for our probation; both for our proof and manifestation, and for the development of our character. There is (as we have seen) a superadded necessity for temptation in the case of penitents,* that we may undo

* See Meditation IV.

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former wrong choices, and so win the restoration of our character. In this connection we may note how close this petition is joined with the preceding by the copula "*and*" "Forgive us our trespasses, . . . *And* lead us not into temptation." Having sought forgiveness for the past, we beg also deliverance and grace for the time to come, that God will indeed show Himself gracious and faithful, both to *forgive* us our sins and to *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness.*

Remembering, then, that temptation is not sin, let us accept and bear it bravely, humbly, penitently, knowing that temptations are, (1) the raw material out of which the robe of righteousness is woven; (2) the opportunity of showing our loyalty and of proving our sorrow for past unfaithfulness; (3) the only means of developing and building up our character; (4) bearing in mind also the assurance that, as in the case of Job, all is subject to the Divine permission and control, "thus far and no further." †

III. There is a further and more awful

* 1 St. John, i. 9. † Job, i. 12; ii. 6.

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sense in which God *may* be said to lead into temptation. In the words of a very thoughtful and devout student of Scripture : *

"When any expression occurs in Scripture which is different from what we should have expected, and which appears to contain some difficulty, then we may be sure that there is something in it to which God wishes to arrest our especial attention. We must not attempt to explain it away, as if it meant something rather different, but rather, taking it as it is, humbly try to comprehend the lesson which God would thereby have us learn ; it may be some awful mystery or precious secret of His Providence."

This solemn and awful lesson of warning we see illustrated in the histories of Pharaoh and of Baalam, as set before us in the Scripture narrative ; † how God gives as a judicial punishment a reprobate (or undiscerning) mind, how He hardens the heart that has first hardened itself, hardens it by withdrawing

* See Isaac Williams, "Lectures on the Church Catechism," on this petition.

† Num. xxii ; Ex. vii.—xi.

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grace when grace has been resisted; how the light ceases to shine when we refuse to walk therein; how the Lord answers that man according to his idols who comes not with a single intention and a pure desire to learn God's will.* We may see the same awful warning in the case of Ahab, to whom, when he was bent on doing his own and not God's will, a lying spirit from the Lord went forth to deceive him.†

There is, then, a sense in which God may be said to lead men into temptation, an evil which we must indeed fear as the greatest of all evils, to be left to ourselves, and given up to our own hearts' lusts, and allowed to follow our own imaginations to our ruin, because we would not obey the commandments and the statutes that the Lord hath given us "for our good always." ‡ There are those to whom He gives their desire and sends leanness withal into their souls. § So that while the common explanation or paraphrase of this petition—which makes it practically equivalent

* Ezek. xiv. 4.
† 1 Kings, xxii. 22.
‡ Deut. vi. 24.
§ Ps. cvi. 15.

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to "Suffer us not to be led into temptation"—is generally true; yet there is a deeper, a more literal, and a more awful meaning to the words of which we must not lose sight. And then the petition teaches us (as St. Cyprian says) whom to fear; not to fear the great enemy who is ever hovering over us as a bird of prey, or as a lion seeking whom he may devour, but to fear only lest we lose the protection of our good God, lest we be found from under His wing when the enemy comes.

IV. Thus we see something of what is involved, as a duty on our part, in offering this petition.

(1) It is a warning *against disobedience* and disregard of the checks of conscience.

(2) It is the utterance of *humility and self-distrust*, a warning against presumption and self-reliance, against any ignoring of our fallen condition, and the frailty and proneness of our nature to evil.

(3) If we honestly and sincerely pray this prayer, we shall certainly be careful to avoid and guard against what are called *the occasions of sin*, those circumstances (of whatever kind)

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which we know, and have proved perhaps by sad experience, to be fraught with danger to our virtue. We shall take heed that we do not ourselves walk or run into temptation, like the foolish moth which flies as if by an irresistible attraction to the flame which scorches, singes, and in the end consumes it. There is scarcely any point on which spiritual writers lay more stress than this, the necessity of avoiding the occasions of sin. A steadfast determination to do this is a necessary element in a true repentance. Let us earnestly lay this to heart, that so long as we expose ourselves to the occasions of sin, Satan laughs at all our good purposes, and the promises we make to God, and that God will withhold efficacious helps from those who voluntarily expose themselves to peril. "He that loveth danger shall perish therein." God will not work miracles in the moral order any more than in the order of nature to counteract our neglect of His ordinary laws. We disregard the general laws that He has laid down for our well-being, we expose ourselves to peril by infection or by neglect and

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heedlessness: we surely suffer for it. It is the same with regard to moral evil. When "the grace of flight" is disregarded, we cannot rely on "the grace of resistance." God warns. He gives grace to resist evil in the beginning that the habit be not formed. But the law of habit (that tendency to repeat an action, good or bad, which is produced by having done the same thing before) is also His. We know how surely it works, the fatal facility with which we *go on* in wickedness. There is a point beyond which it is almost impossible to change, every step makes it more difficult. The first step is in our own power, but often not the last. Let us not, then, hover on the border-line of evil, but resist its beginnings. "Flee from sin as from a serpent." *

"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," was the answer returned by Jesus when the Evil One would have led Him to rash and unwarrantable reliance on Divine support and protection, suggesting that He should cast Himself from the temple roof, trusting to the

* Ecclus. xxi, 2.

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promise of the Psalm, "He shall give His Angels charge concerning thee to keep thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" *—omitting the words "in all thy ways," which limit the promise to the ways of God's appointment, the path of duty, "*the ways*," as St. Bernard puts it, "not the precipices."

Let us mark here again the force of the plural number in which all through the "*Our Father*" we are taught to pray. Perhaps it is not at first sight so easily noticeable in this as in the other petitions. But here surely it is not without its significance. "Lead *us* not into temptation." To pray thus involves the avoiding of occasions, or of what may be occasions of sin, not only for ourselves, but for others likewise. "All things are lawful for me," said the Apostle, "but all things are not expedient" †—for my own good or for that of others. "Let us not judge one another: but judge this rather that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall

* St. Matt. iv. 6. † 1 Cor. x. 23.

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in his brother's way." * What I can defend for myself may be a cause of stumbling to others, and is therefore to be avoided. To how many cases beside that of meats offered to idols does or should this rule of charity apply! If by my levity, or want of reserve (where no harm is intended on my part), if by inconsistency, or what may fairly be deemed such, I should cause others to offend, should suggest or encourage evil in another, I will do no such things, take no such pleasures, while the world standeth.†

"Lead *us* not into temptation," what a reproof is this petition to a parent, or to any in authority, if while praying for those committed to their charge, they are not careful to remove from them whatever is dangerous to their spiritual welfare, to forbid or discourage dangerous companionships, doubtful amusements, or a literature more than doubtful, as perilous to purity of faith or life. And if the prayer be a reproof of *failure to withhold* from temptation, how must it make us shrink from *leading* others into temptation of any

* Rom. xiv. 13. † 1 Cor. viii. 13.

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kind, from in any way coming between a soul and God, or being a hindrance to its advance. This is the very work of the Adversary, as the tempter—a murderer from the beginning, the destroyer of spiritual life and peace."* How awful, yet how common, to be doing thus the Devil's work! By positive persuasion or suggestion, by evil example or influence (and who can gauge the measure or the extent of the influence that consciously or unconsciously goes forth from every one of us?) by leading others to be less careful about religious duties—Prayers, Church, Sacraments, less strict in self-denial, or in conversation lowering the tone of modesty, of charity, or reverence! "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God," † may well be our prayer in this sense. O God, let not my inconsistency turn to the hurt of my brethren; let my prayer avail to the renewal, within any with whom I have shared in sin, of that holiness which I have failed to guard!

We must, then, as we offer this petition see to it that we are not ourselves running into

* St. John, viii. 44. † Ps. li. 14.

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temptation, that *we* tempt not God, that we avoid as far as may be all occasions of sin for ourselves and others.

We ask therein, as the Church Catechism explains the petition, that God will save and defend us not *from*, but *in* all dangers, ghostly and bodily: that He will not withdraw His protecting grace, nor abandon us to our own imaginations; that, according to His promise, He will never suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; that we may be ever enabled to resist whatever temptation He allows to come upon us. Offering this prayer sincerely we will meet temptations bravely, trusting Him to overrule all contrary things to our real advancement, that though we are led *up* to, we be not led *into* temptation so as to succumb thereto, but that, being delivered from the evil, "the trial of our faith may be found unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," * to Whose words at once of warning and of promise we cling, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the

* 1 St. Pet. 1. 7.

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world,"* and "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."†

* St. John, xvi. 33. † Rev. iii. 21.

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MEDITATION VIII.

"BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL."

ST. MATTHEW, VI. 13.

I. NOTE first the force of the copula "*But.*" It marks the close connection of this petition with the preceding clause. "Lead us not into temptation, *but* deliver us from evil." We pray not against all temptation, that we experience it not for our proving; but that we fall not *into* it to our hurt. "Lead us not *into* temptation, *but* deliver us from evil." Let us not be deceived by the crafts, nor overborne by the assaults of the enemy, but deliver (*snatch* would perhaps best represent the force of the Greek word) us from his power. The prayer may well be compared with the intercession of our Lord for His disciples on the night before His Passion, when He asked of His Father, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them

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from the evil." * So long as we are in this world we cannot but be exposed to temptation. Our blessedness is in resistance and conquest: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." † We pray to be rescued from the *evil* into which temptation may betray us:—from slavery to the devil; from the World's perishing attractions or its equally vain threats; from the corruption of the Flesh. We pray that though the Evil One tempt us, he may not be suffered to *hurt* us. Let him do what he will, we may say, to that which is external to us, yet, most gracious Father, cause him to save our life, the true life of our soul. ‡

II. The very word (πόνηρος) which is used in the original marks out that from which we pray to be delivered as *moral* evil. This is the only evil really to be feared. "Be not afraid of them," the Saviour said, "that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." § It is not all that men call evil from which Jesus in this prayer teaches us to ask that we may be delivered. Many

* St. John, xvii. 15.
† St. James, i. 12.
‡ Job, ii. 6.
§ St. Luke, xii. 4.

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are the troubles and sorrows which befall us in this world. Frequently it is not by avoiding, but by bearing them, that we are most truly blessed. The tone of the Lord's Prayer could not be contrary to the direct teaching of the Beatitudes with which the Sermon on the Mount commences, in the course of which the Prayer is given.

Is it evil of bereavement and sorrow, of pain and weakness, from which we shrink? "Blessed are they that *mourn*"* cries the Man of Sorrows.† Is it poverty and loss of position or reputation that seems so hard and evil a lot? "Blessed are the *poor*"‡ (if their poverty be inwardly accepted), declares the Son of Man, who had not where to lay His head,§ who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.‖

Is it misunderstanding and alienation of friends which, touching the inner life, seems an evil worse than these and well-nigh intolerable? "Blessed are they that are *perse-*

* St. Matt. v. 4. † Isa. liii. 3.
‡ St. Matt. v. 3. § St. Luke, ix. 58.
‖ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

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cuted for righteousness' sake,"* declares the crucified Lord of glory.†

Or is it death, the death of those near and dear, our or own, the dissolution of soul and body, the passing away from family, work, associations? "Blessed," a Voice from Heaven proclaimed, "Blessed are *the dead* who die in the Lord; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." ‡

No, pain, sorrow, bereavement, poverty, death, and worse still mental and spiritual trials, all these God can make to work together for good, to them that love Him.§ None of these are of necessity real evils. Picture a martyr, the object of execration to the infuriated and disdainful crowd, exposed to the fury of wild beasts or to the devouring flames; the jeering, the torture is no real evil. What to such a one would be evil? By an act or word of disloyalty to purchase life or freedom, and prove traitor to his conscience and his Lord.

Accordingly, we are taught in the Church's

* St. Matt. v. 10.
† 1 Cor. ii. 8.
‡ Rev. xiv. 13.
§ Rom. viii. 28.

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Litany to pray "*In* [not *from*] all time of our tribulation," aye, and "in all time of our prosperity" likewise; "*in* the hour of death, Good Lord, deliver us." But "*From* all evil and mischief," we say, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil, from Thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation, Good Lord, deliver us.

In all trial, but *from* all that would separate us from Thee, from Thy grace and favor here, from Thy presence hereafter, Good Lord, deliver us.

From *the Evil thing*—from sin, a will alienated from Thee, and beating not in harmony with Thine.

From *the Evil One*—our great spiritual enemy, Satan.

From *the Evil place*—of banishment from Thee in the outer gloom of Hell, apart from Thee, for whom we are made, and in whom alone we can find our peace and joy.

As a Father Thou dost wisely and lovingly chastise and discipline us now, that we be not condemned with the world hereafter.†

* 1 Cor. xi. 32.

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"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. . . . No chastening for the present, we know, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby," * and therefore the Christian learns to glory even in tribulations.† It is to him an added privilege that it is given him not only to believe in the Lord, but also to suffer for His sake.‡ Knowing moreover that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh in us a far more exceeding weight of glory,§ "Correct us, O Lord," we learn to pray, "but with judgment." ‖ In all these external accidents of the transitory world, we would place ourselves unreservedly in Thy hands, begging Thee to deal with us as Thou in Thy love and wisdom seest to be best. "Burn, cut, probe, test, if it be needful, here; but spare hereafter." Remove from me external and temporal advantages which Thou seest to be adverse to my true

* Heb. xii. 6, 11.
† Rom. v. 3.
‡ Phil. i. 29.
§ 2 Cor. iv. 7.
‖ Jer. x. 24.

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spiritual profit; for what shall it profit me to gain the whole world if I lose my own soul? Suffer us not to regard as evil what is the means of our perfection, nor cling to aught as really good which may separate us from Thee.

These considerations do not exclude as unlawful the prayers for help and deliverance which instinctively rise to our lips in times of temporal trouble or external danger. We instinctively cling to life for ourselves and for others; instinctively we shrink from suffering of every and any kind. Nor is this, as we have already considered,* really wrong, so long as we are careful to subordinate temporal to eternal, material to moral and spiritual interests. As in the petition *for* daily bread we include all things necessary for our souls and bodies, but lay especial stress upon the support and nourishment of the spiritual life, so, in the prayer for deliverance *from* evil, we do and may ask to be spared *all* evil save what God sees to be needful for us; to be delivered not from the guilt and power of sin

* Meditation IV.

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alone, but also, so far as may be, from its temporal *consequences* here. But on this we lay stress, this we *require*,* that we may be delivered from the root and source of all other evil—from moral wrong. As the Church Catechism explains the petition, we pray that God, our heavenly Father, "will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our spiritual enemy, and from everlasting death." To this we may well respond, *Amen.* Until, indeed, the last enemy, death, be destroyed, † we can never be wholly freed from suffering. We include, therefore, in this petition, a prayer for the hastening of that time when we shall hunger no more nor thirst any more, when God shall wipe away every tear from our eyes, when there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, for the former things shall have passed away.‡

III. The paraphrase in the Church Catechism suggests a question of controversy concerning the translation of this petition. There has been and is no little discussion as to

* Ps. xxvii. 4. † 1 Cor. xv. 26.
‡ Rev. vii. 16; xx. 4.

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whether, in this clause, we should read, with the ordinary English Version, "Deliver us *from evil*" in general, or, with the Revised Version, "From *the evil one*" in particular; whether, that is, "the evil" (for the definite article in the Greek is certain) is to be regarded as masculine or neuter, personal or abstract. There is, in truth, but little difference between the two renderings. Satan, the Evil One, is the author of all evil in this world.* By one man sin entered into the world, and death (with all its antecedent and attendant sorrows) by sin;† and Satan was the tempter to moral evil, having himself fallen away from God and ceased to abide in the truth.‡ As the Prince of this world,§ the snares of the world may be regarded as his instruments.‖ He it is who stirs up the passions of the flesh. "The whole world," St. John says,¶ "lieth in wickedness," or "in the grasp of the wicked one" (the Greek is the

* See Wisdom, i. 13, 14; ii. 23, 24.
† Rom. v. 12.
‡ St. John, viii. 44.
§ St. John, xiv. 30.
‖ See St. Luke, iv. 6.
¶ 1 St. John, v. 19.

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same as here). Christ our Lord came as the stronger than the strong man, to redeem us from his bondage. *

The personal and masculine rendering, "the Evil One," has the support of most ancient commentators. It witnesses to a most important doctrine, the object, indeed, of ridicule (to his great delight) among men in these days—the truth of the personality of the powers of evil, of Satan and his angels. It has again and again been pointed out that the denial of this doctrine is inconsistent with any serious belief in the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, or with the acceptance of Jesus our Lord as an authoritative teacher. From one end of the Bible to the other—from Genesis to Revelation—this doctrine is taught, and that, it is worth remarking, with ever-increasing clearness; but nowhere is it so clearly taught as in the Gospels and from the lips of our Lord Himself.†

* St. Luke, xi. 22.

† E. g., St. Matt. iv.; St. Luke, iv,; St. Mark, iv. 15; St. Matt. xiii. 19, 39; St. Luke, x. 17 sq.; xi. 14 sq.; xxii. 31; St. John, viii. 44; xiv. 30.

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On the other hand we should do ill to *limit* the prayer to a supplication for deliverance from Satan, unless we remember that sin is his work and hell his home, the place prepared for the devil and his angels, into which those too who follow him must in the end be cast. *

This it is, then, from which we beg to be delivered: "from all sin and wickedness, from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death."

IV. This Prayer, let us once more remember, we are taught to offer *for ourselves and others*, "Deliver *us* from evil." Should not the plural number in which we pray, along with the considerations on which we have already dwelt, have the effect of increasing in us long-suffering toward others and forbearance with their faults?

(1) Others' temptations and infirmities may not be the same with ours; perhaps their faults are more conspicuous, but not more real; it may be not so grievous in the sight of God Most High. Let us associate our-

* St. Matt. xxv. 41.

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selves with them and them with ourselves as fellow-penitents, praying for a common deliverance from the common bondage of sin and Satan. Thus shall we learn long-suffering and compassion.

(2) And as thus we pray for and with all, we shall desire to work for any whom we have the opportunity of helping. What are we doing who thus continually pray, what part are we taking, by prayer, by labor, by alms, in the missionary or in the penitentiary work of the Church, for the rescue of those who are held in ignorance and prejudice, in misery or vice, that they may be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God,* that they may be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God?†

V. This petition closes the Lord's Prayer properly so called. Those words which we often repeat at the conclusion of the prayer, probably (almost certainly) form no real part of it as delivered by our Lord. They are not found in St. Luke's version of the Prayer

* Rom. viii. 21. † Acts, xxv. 18.

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while in St. Matthew's they have but a very doubtful place, and are consequently omitted from the text of the Revised English translation. Most likely they are a doxology founded upon David's prayer at the dedication of the offerings for the Temple),* which, from being commonly used in the early Church after the Lord's Prayer (as we might add the *Gloria Patri*), came to be regarded as a part of the Prayer itself, and by some copyist, following his memory rather than the manuscript before him, was inserted into the text of St. Matthew's Gospel.

As a Doxology the words remind us of the duty of mingling *worship* with our supplications, the lesson that we learned in considering the first petition, "Hallowed be Thy Name."

They may also be regarded as a *Pleading* of God's attributes, His Might and Glory, for the fulfilment of our requests; very much as the Psalmist prays, "O Lord, arise, help us and deliver us, for Thy Name's sake;" "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy

* 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

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Name give the praise."* So here we beg of God to supply our needs, to forgive our sins, to deliver us from all evil, "*for* Thine is the Kingdom," acknowledging His might and ability: great as may be the power of the usurping enemy, almighty is our Sovereign Lord; impossible as it may be for man to get free, yet all things are possible with God.† We plead with Him thus, moreover, to hear our prayers because we belong to him. *For Thine is the Kingdom*, of which we are subjects, *and* Thine is *the Power*, which we invoke and in which alone we trust; *and* Thine is *the glory*, for all shall be referred to Thee, and shall redound to Thy glory, in the praise of Thy redeemed and grateful servants.‡ Our deliverance from evil, the evil into which we have fallen, "shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."§ So in every temptation, from whatever cause arising, in every contest with our spiritual foes, we may pray:

* Ps. cxv. 1. † St. Matt. xix. 26.
‡ Comp. 2 Cor. i. 11; Rev. v. 9 sq.
§ Isa. lv. 13.

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" Jesus, Master, King of Glory,
Still to Thee we turn for life;
Conqueror when the battle's sorest,
O sustain us in the strife.

" So when all at last is ended
And the rest is reached above;
May we swell Thy Heart's rejoicings
With the rapture of our love." *

* "Battle Song," by the Rev. W. J. Knox-Little.

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